

ORIGINAL



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Medical Epidemiologist, EMB, OHA

Trip Report: Town meeting, Schaffer Electric, Minden, West Virginia,
April 25, 1989

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Associate Administrator

Through: Director, Office of Health Assessment _____
Acting Chief, Epidemiology and Medicine Branch, OHA _____

INTRODUCTION

The Environmental Protection Agency, Region III conducted a Removal Action at the Schaffer Electric Site in Minden, West Virginia over the period 12-19-84 through 12-20-87. Part of the reason for this extended period was the trial (and failure) of an "innovative" soil cleanup procedure. Concerned citizen group(s) under various names have apparently attempted two "health studies" as follows:

- A. Concerned citizens to save Fayette County and New River Health Center have sponsored a "health study" about which we know very little at this time. Other sponsors/participants in this effort are mentioned in a set of xeroxed papers (Attachment B) given to state DNR, state and county health departments, EPA, ATSDR representatives and Senator Rockefeller. ATSDR staff have been totally unaware of this exercise including its origin, protocol, methodology, and peer-review, if any.
- B. ^{oncologist?} A local gynecologist, Dr. Merritt, also conducted a "health survey" and mailed this unannounced to ATSDR staff in the Epidemiology and Medicine Branch. It consisted of self-administered questionnaires simulating a symptom prevalence survey. Again, its origin, protocol, methodology, peer-review, if any, are extremely obscure.
2. Site visit/group meeting with Agency Representatives and Senator Rockefeller.

At 9:00 a.m. on April 25, 1989, representatives from EPA, ATSDR, West Virginia Department of Health, West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, county health department and concerned citizens met at the

Page 2 - Associate Administrator

Schaffer Electric Site with Senator Rockefeller to review its history of cleanup actions and present concerns. The representatives I met included:

1. Senator, John D. Rockefeller and staff Mr. Bailey and Mr. Altheiser.
2. EPA
 - . Charles Kleeman, Region III Removal Section Chief.
3. West Virginia Health Department
 - . Clarence Christian - Plateau district sanitarian
 - . Loretta Haddy - State Epidemiologist
4. Fayette County Health Department
 - . Lee Massey - Administrative Assistant to county health officer
 - . Keith Lyons - Chief, Sanitarian
5. West Virginia DNR
 - . Pamela Hayes
6. Concerned Citizens to save Fayette County
 - . Larry Rose - Chair

After the site visit, this group plus approximately 10 other citizens met in a local elementary school to discuss a plan of action. It was decided that State DNR will begin a "Listing Site Investigation" this summer. EPA money will be used to reevaluate the extent of PCB contamination, if any, in a three mile radius of the site. This will allow EPA to determine its NPL status, and if "positive" in new Hazard Ranking Scale, it would trigger a formal health assessment from ATSDR. I stated that two other mechanisms could trigger a health assessment including a citizens' petition or a request by the State Health Department. Loretta Haddy indicated that she would write Dr. Bashor, Director, OHA to request a health assessment be done at this site after the "Listing Site Investigation" was complete (approximately 6 months from inception). I stated that our health assessment would utilize all available data including that from the original sampling in 1983-1984, all clean up data, and any new environmental data included in the DNR investigation. We would also incorporate any epidemiologically valid "health data" that came to our attention. These plans were presented to a much larger "town meeting" in the school auditorium and questions were fielded and responses made by all representatives. The meeting adjourned approximately 12:30 p.m. Tuesday April 25, 1989.

Gary F. Stein, M.D., M.O.H.

Attachment

cc:

Loretta Haddy, State Epidemiologist, West Virginia
Lynn Wilder, Region III, ATSDR ✓